Washington, DC — With the rising cost of energy today, business owners and consumers are becoming more and more aware of the importance of investing in alternative and renewable energy technologies. During an Energy Roundtable Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) held in May at the Media Theatre for Performing Arts, he sat side-by-side local constituents, business owners, environmentalists and energy experts and engaged in a firsthand discussion on how energy prices are affecting consumers and businesses. Participants also discussed the necessary investments that need to be made in energy-saving technology and the important role of alternative energies and technologies.

— One of the important points of discussion Congressman Sestak took away from the Energy Roundtable was the importance to improve funding for research on energy efficiency and storage technology. Following the event, Congressman Sestak worked to include legislative ideas and proposals from the Energy Roundtable into legislation, and on Monday, October 22, 2007, voted for passage of two energy bills related to their recommendations – the Energy Storage Technology Advancement Act of 2007 (H.R. 3776), and the Industrial Energy Efficiency Research and Development Act of 2007 (H.R. 3775).

“Promoting alternative and clean energy, research and development is critical to our nation’s energy security,” stated Congressman Sestak. “In our globalizing world, competition has never been so high. America’s economic competitiveness is dependent on our nation’s ability to continue to be innovators in the energy and technologies sector. With these bills, we can promote both conservation for the environment while supporting business growth and development.”

The Energy Storage Technology Advancement legislation brings $780 million in new funding from 2009 to 2014 for energy research to improve industrial energy efficiency and energy storage for electrical grids and hybrid vehicles. Specific research projects are aimed at providing better methods to dispose of used batteries of vehicles and to open hydrogen fuel studies. Of this $780 million, $300 million will go to basic science research while the remaining $480 million will go towards applied research.

The Industrial Energy Efficiency Research and Development Act will set aside $750 million between 2009 to 2013, $150 million each year, for a program within the Department of Energy to work with energy-intensive industries, industry trade associations, and institutions of higher education to conduct cost-shared research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities for new innovations and technologies to enhance industrial efficiency and economic competitiveness of U.S. industrial sector. The Act also requires the Secretary of Energy to fund University-based Industrial Research and Assessment Centers to aid small and medium sized manufacturers by identifying opportunities to optimize their energy efficiency and improve environmental performance through advanced technologies, to serve as a resource for technical data, and to train engineering and research students to conduct energy assessments.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.